

Hopper Knows by **xxPurpleStars3xx**

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Summary: We see in 2x03 that Hopper knows about El's visits to Mike. Hopper knows these probably aren't the best idea. Starts how I think the first time he found out past season 2. No flames please!

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It's day thirteen at the new house and Chief Jim Hopper does his special knock to let Eleven know he's home and to unlock the door.

He waits a moment for the familiar clicks of the locks unlocking, but nothing happens. So he tries the knock again.

Still nothing.

He's standing out there for a good five minutes until he decides one last time to do the special knock.

This time, the door opens.

"Sorry," Eleven apologizes as Jim walks in to the house.

He notices the TV isn't set to its usual show when he gets home, but it turned off completely. It's weird, he could've sworn he heard voices while he was outside. Then he notices the bandana in Eleven's hand.

"What happened here, kiddo?" he asks.

"Nothing," Eleven replies, sitting on the sofa.

"El, why is a bandana in your hand and the TV off?"

Eleven sighs, tilts her head to the right and the TV turns on, a black and white screen screeching a high-pitched noise. Hopper puts his hands over his ears until Eleven turns off the television set.

"TV," is all she says.

"What do the television and the bandana have to do with each other?" Hopper is still wondering.

"I visited him."

It's then that Hopper can see smeared blood on her shirt, something she must've done just before she let Hopper in.

"You visited who?" he inquires.

"Mike. In the Void."

Hopper just stares the girl he had found in the woods less than two weeks ago. He knows she's missing the boys, the people who had taken her in when she had been lost in the woods several months back.

Especially Michael Wheeler.

Hopper sighs and goes to heat up to TV dinners.

"He says he misses me," Eleven states.

"I bet they all do," Hopper replies.

"Can I see them soon?"

Hopper turns around to see the twelve-year-old's wet eyes.

"Soon," Hopper agrees.

It's day twenty-one when Hopper realizes that she's done this before, and not just the time he caught her earlier this week.

"You see him again?" he asks her as he brings in that night's dinner of Chinese take-out.

Eleven nods, blood running down her nose.

"You wanna tell me how many times you've done this since you escaped that place?"

Eleven shakes her head.

Hopper sighs as they both sit at the dinner table.

"I want to see him," she says.

"Soon."

It's not soon enough for Eleven, who keeps pushing Hopper and visiting Mike almost every chance she gets.

Hopper believes he's doing the right thing by keeping her out of sight. Out of sight, out of correct, correct?

Apparently not for anybody that went through the entire ordeal that the Byers, Mike, Dustin, Lucas, Hopper and Eleven went through.

It's day one hundred when Eleven finally opens up to him.

"He counts the days," she says as she eats her peas. "He tells me all about his day."

"Oh?" Hopper asks. "What happened today?"

"They went to the arcade and Dustin lost at Dragon's Lair again." Hopper nods and motions her to keep going. "He's not the same. He's...miserable?"

It's her word of the week.

"Want me to go check on him?" Hopper propositions.

Eleven shakes her head.

"Will I see him soon?" she asks.

Hopper stops. He knows in the past he would say yes, and he's sure in the future he would say she could see him soon too many times to count when he knows she most likely will not anytime soon.

Hopper knows how much seeing him in the Void means to El. Even if she can't touch him or he can't see her, he knows that even seeing him means the world to her.

If only do it live.

If only she wasn't locked up in this place, the Chief thinks.

Hopper reluctantly nods, knowing she will hold this over him if

"soon" doesn't come as quick as she expects.

It's day two hundred when Hopper finally decides that seeing Mike is no good for her.

"You keep hurting yourself!" he yells. "Seeing him—much less seeing him missing you—is hurting you."

"It's not!" she screams back. "You say soon and it never happens! It's the only way I can see him!"

Hopper puts his hand on top of his almost non-existent hair and sighs. He knows it's true, but seeing her missing him is probably the worst part in all of this.

She's hurting herself, and both know it.

She knows it every time she wipes the blood from her nose. She knows it every time she sees him in that little fort she slept in that week when she was in Mike's home.

He knows it when he hears her barely-audible cries at night. He hears it when he comes home and the TV is suddenly in another room of the small house they live in.

Both know it, and both knows the other know it, too.

"I know you miss him," he says after a minute of contemplation. "I know you do, sweetie, but if you have to do it, maybe do it a little less. It's hurting you, and I hate for anything to hurt you."

Both know he's broken the promise of "Soon" too many times to count. Both know that she's not leaving or seeing him anytime outside of the Void anytime soon.

She nods, and just like that, she breaks down in Hopper's arms. He cradles her gently, letting her get out all of her frustration.

But Hopper knows that as soon as he's gone, she'll be right back in the Void with Mike sometime at night in the next week, no matter how much it hurts her.

Because the two kids—however crazy it might seem—have a connection. Hopper knows a connection when he sees one, and from the moment he set his eyes on Eleven and Mike, he knew there was a connection there.

Hopper knows the only way to make her happy besides learning and watching TV was to see Mike. He makes the promise a few more times, but both know he won't keep it.

Hopper knows that day he can't make anymore promises he can't keep. He knows it's not safe, but he knows that she and Mike need to see each other soon, no matter how dangerous it might be. He knows that the risk of her going outside is great. He knows the risk is a big one.

But he knows one day things will be worse. That things will be tougher than they are now. He hates it, but promises are meant to be kept, not broken. He knows it's killing he and it's killing him, too.

It's a little less than one hundred and sixty days before the two finally meet under less-than-ideal circumstances.

Hopper understands Mike's outrage. He knows what he did was right, but was wrong at the same time. Keeping two kids apart who *desperately* wanted to see each other was terrible, but it was a risk Hopper knows was worth it.

He holds Mike as the teenage boy cries into his chest, happy to have his girl back.

And when Will is back to normal Hopper knows he needs to get Eleven a Walkie-Talkie, so she can talk to Mike and the boys again. Both Eleven and Hopper know that he's never going to keep her as sheltered as she was before. Both know that unless absolutely necessary she will never go into that Void again.

Hopper knows he made the right decision in keeping her safe and out of sight. He knows Eleven knows it, too. Hopper knows the broken promises and the nights she spent in the Void with Mike hurt her, but he knows that nothing (and no one) will ever keep the two of the separate again.